

PLAINFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HIDDEN WALLS, HIDDEN MILLS

EXPLORING THE PLAINFIELD LANDSCAPE



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masshumanities.org





walls

Hidden Walls, Hidden Mills -- Self Guided Tour Maps



About the Project

Events

Maps & Brochures

Photos

Contact Us

Local Resources

Highland Communities
Hilltown CDC
Mass Humanities



How to get tour maps and descriptions:

- *Hidden Walls, Hidden Mills* is a series of five self-guided tours of the Plainfield landscape, freely available to everyone. Most of the ground they cover is publicly accessible. Where not, it is noted in the description.
- The walks build a knowledge base about reading the landscape in the order presented below. *Farming in Stone* contains the most complicated map, and the tour leaves things uninterpreted: you can work with the map to find a lot more than is explained in the brochure. We would not recommend it as a first experience for someone new to the process of exploring the landscape, or new to working with maps.

That said, you are of course welcome to use them in any order.

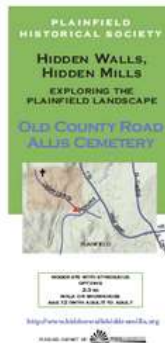
- You can find the brochures in various places around Plainfield, including Shaw Memorial Library, or you can print your own.

Printing:

Use 8 1/2 x 14 (legal) size paper; set the orientation (1=landscape -- the others are portrait); turn off automatic sizing, scaling, and text orientation (this is very important*); fold in three. You should be able to fold the text up and down or back and forth to consult it and the text in turn. [*With the exception of the first, all brochures are in "portrait" orientation, and some newer printers want to flip the text on the text side. Make sure it remains upside down in relation to the map.] Warning: the files are large, 5-10 MB.

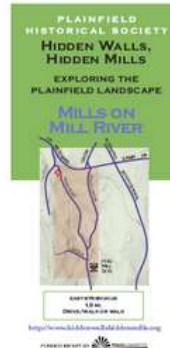
Tour 1: Old County Road Allis Cemetery

Click to download brochure: [Old Country Road Allis Cemetery \(PDF\)](#)



Tour 2: Mills on Mill River

Click to download brochure: [Mills on Mill River \(PDF\)](#)



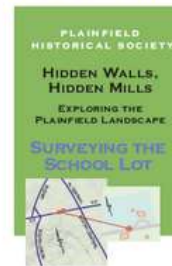
Tour 3: Plainfield Aqueduct Company 1816-1971

Click to download brochure: [Plainfield Aqueduct Company 1816-1971 \(PDF\)](#)



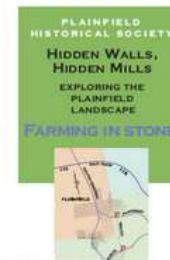
Tour 4: Surveying the School Lot

Click to download brochure: [Surveying the School Lot \(PDF\)](#)



Tour 5: Farming in Stone

Click to download brochure: [Farming In Stone \(PDF\)](#)



✓
Lemuel Allis of N. Yeo. ^{PH 3-2} (20A) m: Nov 21, 1814
Amasa Packard of N. Yeo. (Book 50 p 47) ^{PH 25-2 No 5} for: \$90.00

— a certain - parcel of land - in Pl. + lies Westerly of said
Allis' house, bounded - Easterly on the Co. Rd, where it
is now travelled, W. on Agell + Peabody ^{# 4-2} Gentlett's land,
and Southerly on the said Amasa Packard's land,
= c. 20 A⁺ - [no N. boundary given]

James Richards
Melinda Stoddard } wit.

— Lemuel Allis
— Rhoda ^{WIT} Allis
[Rhoda (Bunoughis) Allis]



cemeteries



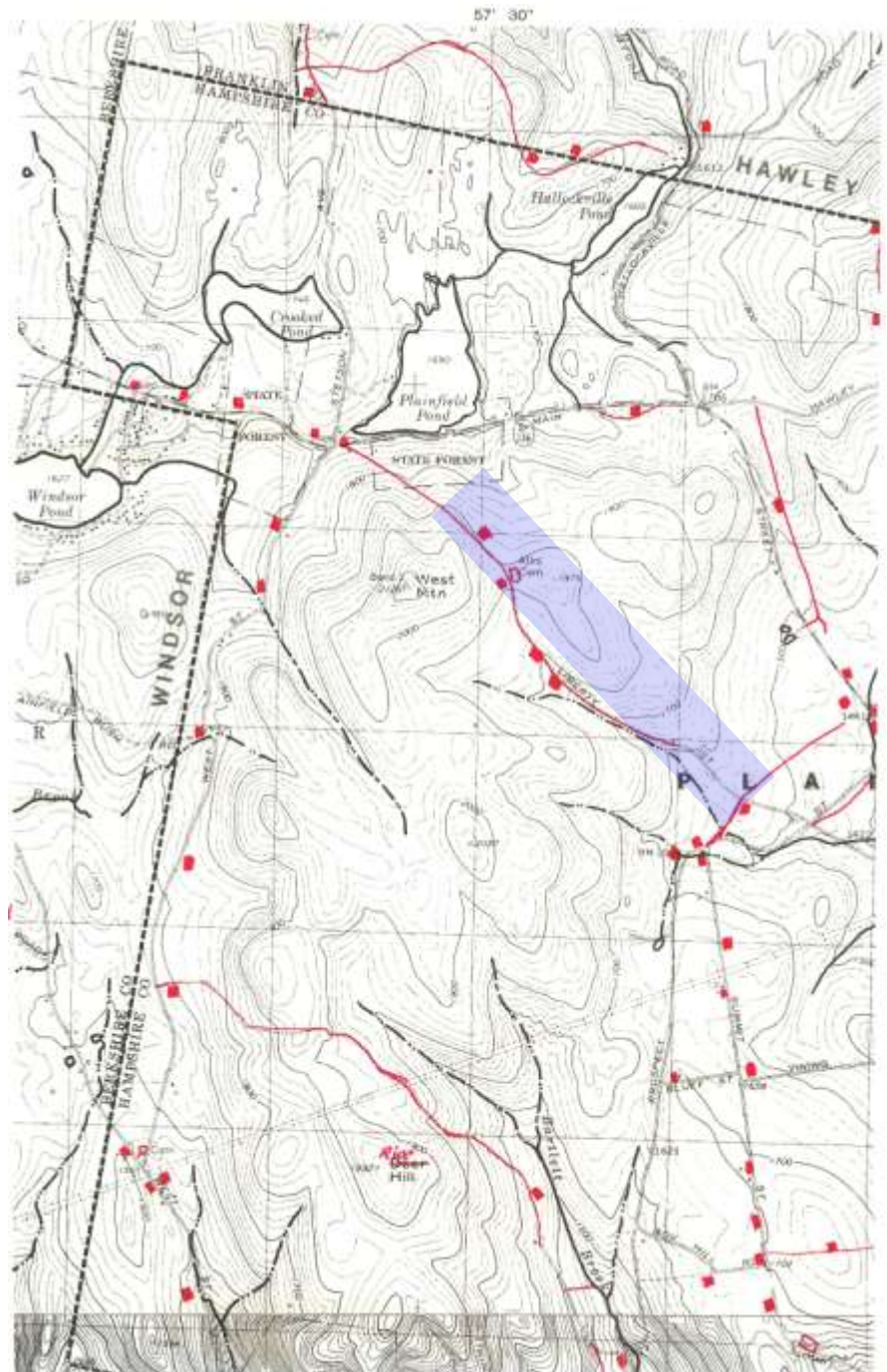
cellarholes I have seen

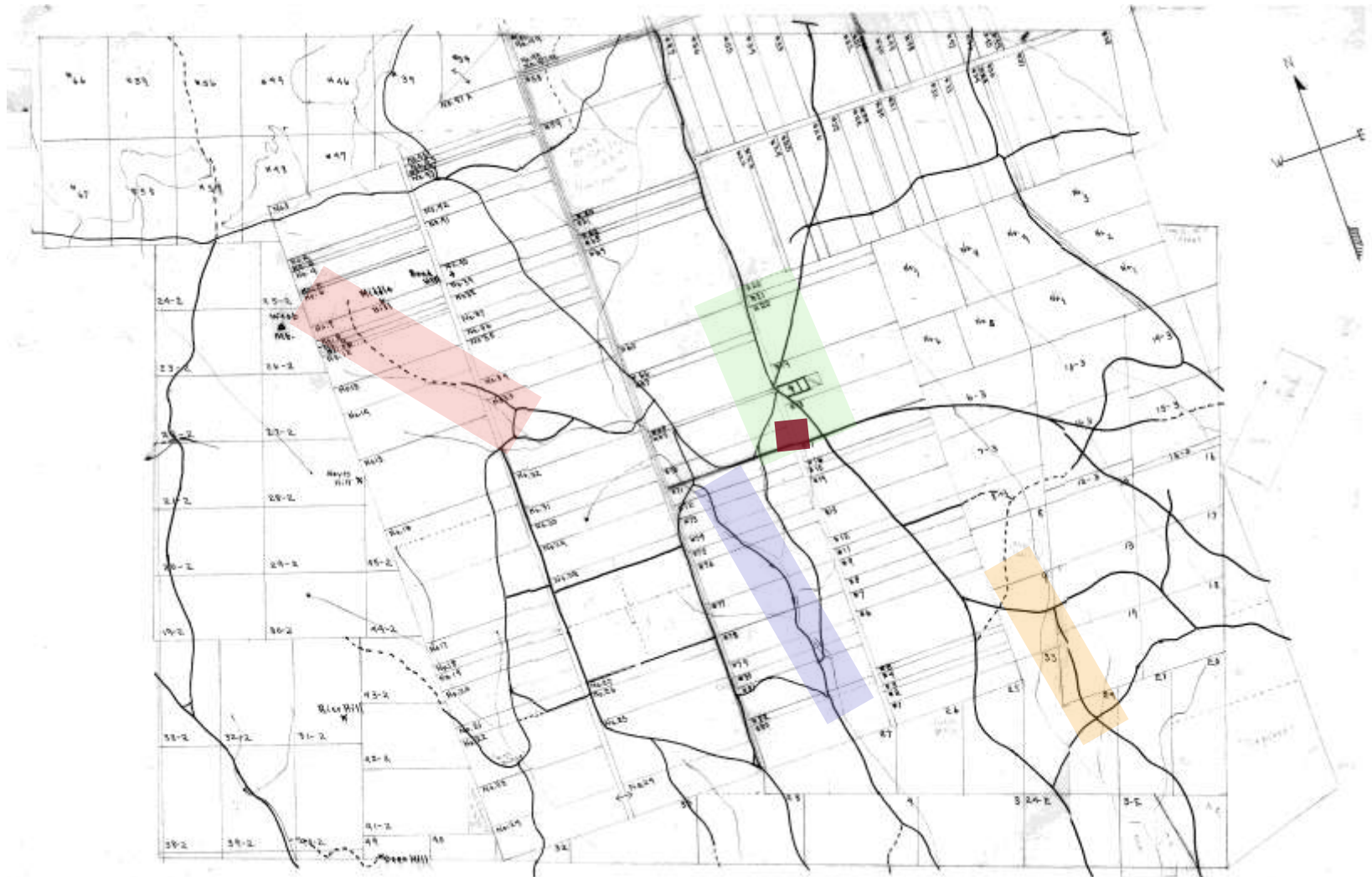


old roads I have walked

since 1972

Arvilla Dyer





The ultimate result



Creating HWHM:
Scouting and
MassGIS



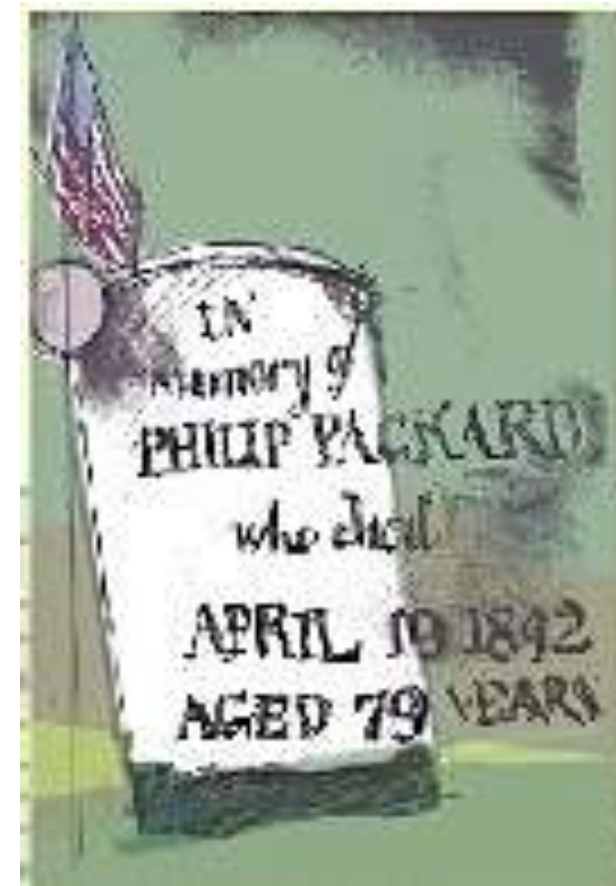
Brian Hawthorne

Maps/Brochures: Gail Fusco



LEGEND

- Cellar Hole
- Unknown Foundation
- Dam Site
- Mill Site
- Cemetery
- Well
- House
- Building
- Look Here
- Point of Interest
- Sherlock



- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Plantation #5 | Farm boundary on grant-lot boundary | House-settlement period (1770-1800) | Cellar hole/foundation |
| Hatfield Equivalency | Grant-lot boundary wall | House-farming period (1800-1900) | Parking |
| Mayhew Grant | Farm boundary wall | Barn Settlement period to 1840 | Cemetery |
| | Farming/industrial wall | Modern Structure | Apple tree |
| | Field wall | Factory location | Locust tree |
| | Enclosure wall | School location | LOOK HERE |
| | Wall on road | Dam location | |
| | Discontinued road | Mill site | |
| | Franklin-Land Trust self-guided tour | Stone Pile | |
- Clockwise from top left:
Guyette Farm
White Farm
Thatcher Farm
Manda Farm

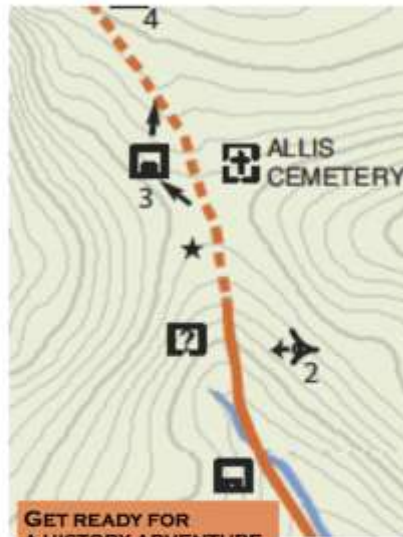
PLAINFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HIDDEN WALLS, HIDDEN MILLS EXPLORING THE PLAINFIELD LANDSCAPE

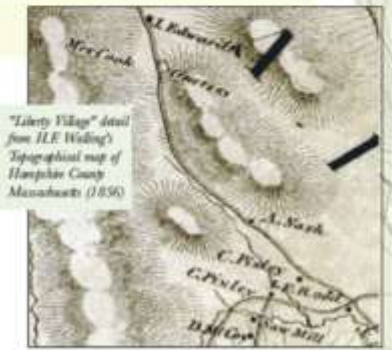
OLD COUNTY ROAD ALLIS CEMETERY

DATE: Sunday, June 24, 2 pm
(maps @ 2 pm, guided tour @ 2:45 pm)

PLACE: Behind Shaw Memorial Library
(304/312 Main Street, Plainfield, MA 01070)



GET READY FOR
A HISTORY ADVENTURE



Please wear or bring appropriate clothing and gear for a moderate hike or a walk on uneven or steep terrain: sturdy shoes, rain gear, sweatshirt, long pants, bug dope, water, snacks, hiking poles PLUS whatever you need to have an adventure: compass, GPS, Topos, binoculars, measuring tape, camera, nature guide, pencil, deerstalker hat, imagination.

Free and open to the public

Pleun Bouricius (bouric@post.harvard.edu) 413-634-2250

Elaine Sidney (esidney@socialaw.com) 413-634-8063



This program is funded in part by Mass Humanities

Tours in Plainfield



A humanities-based interpretive tour or trail relates to a traditional history tour something like a botany outing relates to an ecological trail.

- Based on “facts”
- Learn about specific things or sites one after the other
- Does not necessarily relate itself to today
- Leads to fact fatigue



Can we talk
or explore?

- Based on ideas expressed as themes and relationships
- About specific things or sites by putting them in relation to each other
- Has a narrative or story that communicates the ideas
- Relates itself to today, advances understanding of today
- welcomes questions

Reading the constructed landscape

SIGNS OF FORMER HABITATION IN “NATURE” • Day lilies, bayberry • Remnants of apple orchard • Old maple trees lining the walls

UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF MILL SITES AND CELLAR HOLES: Key to a **mill** foundation is the opening for water to get out of the mill, the *tail race* — which might be silted in. (River Road)

HISTORY OF TOWN DEVELOPMENT: Discovering the route of the pipeline of the Plainfield Aquaduct Company, which was formed in 1816 as a common enterprise. Its rights of way have shaped the landscape.

HISTORY SHAPING THE LANDSCAPE: Land surveying, land grants, and divisions that shaped four farms over 200 years; as seen in stone walls.

LAWS SHAPING THE LANDSCAPE *“All fences of four feet high, in in good repair, of rails ... or stone walls; . . . shall be accounted legal and sufficient ..”*

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN USE OF NATURE: *Water runs downhill except where it doesn't*: up into trees by capillary action (sugaring), through a pipe with some speed and force (mill flumes), or is under pressure (spring or artesian well). All were used on small industry farms.

history of community development

History of the made landscape

READING THE LANDSCAPE WALLS AND WELLS

Not all stone walls are created equal. Some are mere piles of stones, some — like the wall surrounding Hilltop Cemetery and the Shaw-Hudson House — are works of art: beautiful, even, double-stacked walls. These are in fact likely to be newer, since farmers would have piled up any stones just to get rid of them at the edge of one's property (at first), to form a base for a 4' fence (in the sheep-herding times of the first quarter of the nineteenth century when wool was lucrative). In some towns, slave labor may have accounted for the creation of a wall of beauty. Plainfield is not likely to ever have produced enough surplus for such luxury.

Some walls in Plainfield still run on the old grid on which the Hatfield Equivalent Grant, surveyed in 1744. Unlike the grid of the Town of Cummington (surveyed 1762,

of which Plainfield was initially a part, the much earlier Hatfield Grant at its heart was laid out virtually exactly on a North-South axis (2 degrees West of North). If you encounter such a wall, it is likely that it has been there for a very long time. We have marked some of them on the map.

Older rights of way for water use — of which there are many, many in Plainfield, tend to follow natural or man-made features of the landscape. It's much easier to run and maintain a water pipe along a stone wall, than across a field. Note that a plow finally undid the PAC water "main."

Trees whisper tales: if you try to decide where an access trail or a water pipe once ran, a large tree can tell you on which side of the wall it may have. Those very large maples are close to 200 years old.

THE PLAINFIELD AQUADUCT COMPANY: A SHORT HISTORY

On October 18, 1816, the Plainfield Aqueduct Company (PAC) was organized by Dr. Barney Torrey, John Mack, Josiah Shaw 3d, Lt. Levi Cook, and Dr. Jacob Porter, all of whom lived in the center of Plainfield, to harness one of the many springs bubbling up on Ebenezer Nash's land, and share the burden of maintaining a water supply system.

They needed water. The Plainfield "Common" — the land at the NE corner of 116 and Central streets, was getting pretty crowded. John Mack had a house and was getting ready to build a store, Levi Cook did or was about to have a blacksmith's shop, and ditto William Daniels. In such close quarters, it was tough to get enough water for industry and commerce out of shallow, hand-dug wells. Not to mention the issue of privvies. Running water from up the hill was a ticket to success.

Initially, the water ran in "water logs" to "pen stocks" (wooden pipe); later iron, lead, and plastic pipes were buried. It was brought down through the fields to Central Street, whence it supplied, at minimum, 12 and 4 N Central, the Brick Corner Store with public cistern, 276



Drawings of transactions in the center of Plainfield, by Priscilla C. Allen on the back of her deed notecards.

Main, the Shaw-Hudson House (1833), and 2 South Central (the Post Office). Soon, it would also be diverted to the Rev. Kimball at 296 Main and the Rev. Moses Hallock next door (burned 1916).

The spring was not strong enough for the water needs of the twentieth century. In 1925, the Hallock Memorial School was admitted to the Company, and the search was on for a pump. Richard Nye sold the company an additional spring, about 100 feet southwest of the first, for \$100 in 1941. Locks went onto what had become a spring-house and the school drilled an artesian well (the kind almost everyone now has).

Despite periodic shortages and continuous equipment troubles, the Company delivered water until the spring 1971, when a plow broke the main pipe. It was almost rusted shut anyway.

The many "rights of way" for PAC pipes, along with those for other springs and for the high tension wires, are still in existence, making the center of town in Plainfield — peaceful, even sleepy as it may appear — a tangled web of rights of way for utilities, encouraging cooperation as well as wont to cause conflict among the town's inhabitants.

IT'S THE LAW

IT'S THE LAW: The early inhabitants of Plainfield did not know that privvies contaminate wells and cause disease. (Louis Pasteur read his paper on germ theory to the French Academy of Sciences on April 29th, 1878. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Pasteur) Nevertheless, the proprietors of the Plainfield Aqueduct Company seem to have appreciated the virtues of plenty of clean water. For one thing, shallow wells close together take each other's water. As a whole, building houses close together is a bit of a problem when water doesn't get brought in by pipe and waste doesn't get taken away by another pipe. Massachusetts regulates the dis-

posal of waste water — Title V of the State Environmental Code — 310CMR15, Disposal Systems <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/300-399cmr.html> — much more tightly than the establishment of private wells or springs. MGL C 111, Sect 27A leaves it to each town's Board of Health, if it so chooses, to adopt standards other than the state. <http://www.mass.gov/legis/legis.htm> Generally speaking, it's a matter of what came first, but the separation between a leach field and a well has to be at least 100 feet, sometimes 150 if the well is downhill, and the separation between wells, 50. It all depends on who's in charge in which town on what day.

Relevance: current law and environment

LIST OF THINGS TO BRING

What you need to PREPARE and BRING (6 and up with parent)

1. Compass marked with degrees. Learn how to use one here, for instance:

<http://www.buckskin.org/resources/Outdoor/compass1.htm>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Metes and Bounds Survey: The historic British method of describing land for legal transactions, used in New England land. It defines a piece of land in relation to known or given points or boundaries ("bounds"), by starting in one corner and descriptively walking around it, measuring ("meting") for instance along stone

ch
ed
49.5
fic bound-
of a stream
guage is an
meaning
void").
Gunter's

WARRANTY DEED

On May 29, 1925, Clara E. Hudson of Plainfield, in a WARRANTY DEED recorded in Book 823, page 372, at the Hampshire Registry of Deeds in Northampton, conveyed to the Town of Plainfield, for "one dollar and other good and valuable consideration" a "certain parcel of land" described as follows:

Beginning at the end of a stone wall in or near the north line of Main Street, said wall being the dividing line between the property conveyed and land of Everett Jackson, thence Northerly about twenty two and one half rods in the line of said wall to land of E.F. Hamlin, thence Easterly about seventeen and three fourth rods in said

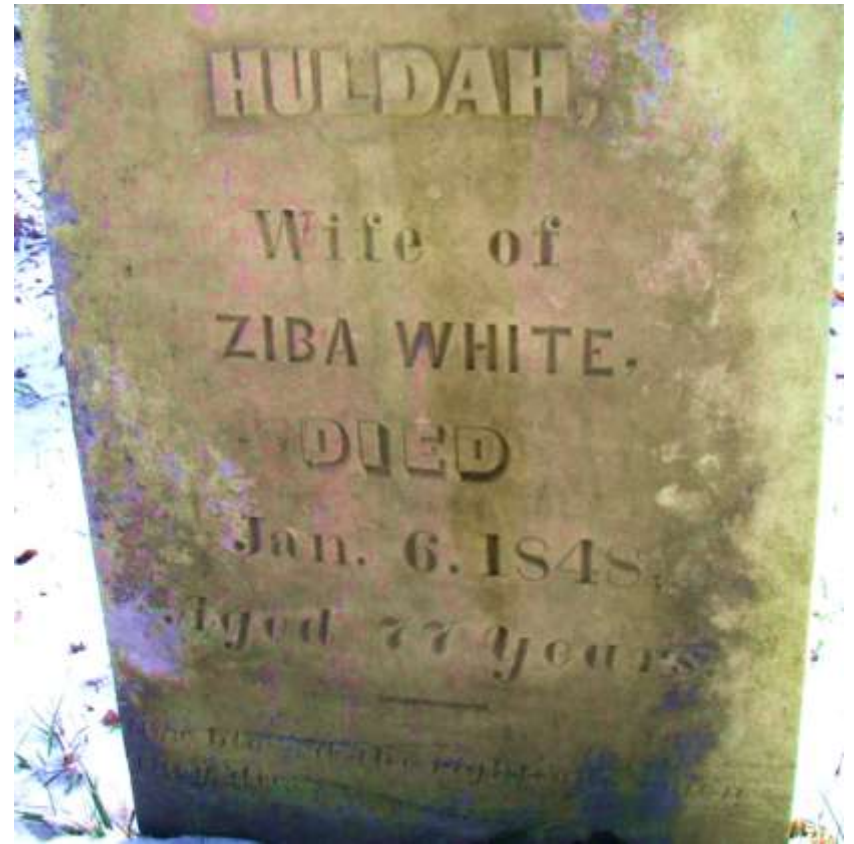
Instructions and practical information

Simple map





*Be ye also
ready*



*How blessed are the
righteous when they die*

... Interpretive emphasis added ...

